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OF THE
EPHESIANS:
OR,
The Original of
IDOLATRY,
Together with the
Politick Institutions
OF THE
Gentiles Sacrifices.

*Cum sis ipse nocens moritur cur victima pro te?
Stultitia est morte alterius sperare salutem.*

Cosmopoli.

Charles Blount
1680
1695

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PREFACE.

Self-love, which like Fire covets to resolve all things into it self, makes men they care not what Villany or what Impiety they act, so it may but conduce to their own advantage. And from hence it was, that the Heathens turned Religion into a Trade, wherein the most gainful was their Sacrifices : mendicantes vicatim Deos ducunt ; a God was then as fit an object for Charity, as now a broken Arm, or a wooden Leg : nor did they consider their Gods any otherwise, than for their own Interest. Now as Musick hath that Sympathetick power, to heighten that Passion which is most predominant in mens Natures, whether of Mirth or Melancholly ; so likewise Religion if it meets with good Nature, it makes it better, but if with bad Nature, it makes it worse : not that true Religion is here to be blamed, but only those ill constitutions, wherein the most Sacred Instructions turn sower. Obdurate hearts are ever most subject to Atheism, whereas softer Natures are ever more inclined to Superstition ; in which

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Tone and Noise, and praise not the Lord
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The Immortal God is of too sublime a
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Now most of the Heathen Priests were such Porters, and their Arcana Divinitatis but ridiculous Nothings, wherewith they deluded the Vulgar. As I have heard of a Country Alehouse-keeper, who being a crafty Knave, devised this trick to get a ready vent for his Liquor: He gave out

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Such were the mysteries of the ancient Heathenish Religions, and what I have here written concerns them only: for when Christ came into the World, he deliver'd a Doctrine so pious, just, and necessary, that (even in its Infancy) its own merits supported it, without the assistance of Prinees or Grandees. What is more rea-
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The general decay of Piety, hath in most Religions whatsoever proceeded from the exemplary viciousness of their Clergy; (though perhaps less in ours, than in others; for I am unwilling to raise an unjust outcry against a good Air, because
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If Shepherds go themselves astray,
How should their Sheep ere find the way?
If he that Teaches, is to Learn,
How should the Scholar truth discern?

Vale.

THE

P R E F A C E.

Self-love, which like Fire covets to resolve all things into it self, makes men they care not what Villany or what Impiety they act, so it may but conduce to their own advantage. And from hence it was, that the Heathens turned Religion into a Trade, wherein the most gainful was their Sacrifices : mendicantes vocationem Deos ducunt ; a God was then as fit an object for Charity, as now a broken Arm, or a wooden Leg : nor did they consider their Gods any otherwise, than for their own Interest. Now as Musick hath that Sympathetick power, to heighten that Passion which is most predominant in mens Natures, whether of Mirth or Melancholly ; so likewise Religion if it meets with good Nature, it makes it better, but if with bad Nature, it makes it worse : not that true Religion is here to be blamed, but only those ill constitutions, wherein the most Sacred Instructions turn sower. Obdurate hearts are ever most subject to Atheism, whereas softer Natures are ever more inclined to Superstition ; in which

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The *Immortal God* is of too sublime a *Nature*, to be comprehended by us *Mortals*; wherefore no men are so great *Atheists*, as those who make a livelihood by telling *I yes of his most Sacred Majesty*: converso in *precium Deo*. How many *Religions* are there in the *World*, which (though of contrary *Principles* to one another) yet all pretend themselves derived from one and the same *Infinite Being*! Therefore he who would be of the most excellent *Faith*, must try all, and then (as *St. Paul* advises) hold fast that which is best. He should do by the several *Religions*,

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THE

I

The Original of
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The Proem.

A Discourse concerning Heathen Religions in general, were certainly a vast undertaking, and vain ; it being too immense a labour for any one man, either by reading sufficiently to comprehend the Ancient Idolatry, or by Travel through both the *Indies* to discern that of this Age. Nor would it be less vain, if possible to be attain'd : For all Superstitions are to the people but like several Sports to Children, which vary-
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ing in their several Seasons, yield them pretty entertainment for the time, and when grown out of request, deserve no further consideration, but are still supplanted by new ones to the same purpose. Therefore to abbreviate my undertaking, after having touched a little upon the Original of Idolatry, I do in the rest of this discourse confine my self to one part of their Superstition, viz. their Sacrifices, and more especially their Sanguinary ones, as being the most horrid and brutish of all others: Also in them I observe only their seeming Rational and Politick Fundamentals, without mentioning the Sacerdotal particulars in the celebration of their fantastical Ceremonies; which are innumerable, though in effect but like the Ribbands on a Hobby-horse. Now if any Hypocrite to glorifie his own zeal, should pretend that a discourse of this nature does through the Heathen Sacrifices, reproach: those of *Moses*, which resembled them but in outward appearance, he must receive himself from

retire

from that error, if he rightly apprehends the difference : For the one justifies his Institutions as directed to the true God, and ordain'd as Typical by his appointment ; whereas the other (*viz.* those of the Heathen) had neither of these Qualifications, and therefore no more ought to be spared for their resemblance to those of the *Jews*, then a Criminal ought to be pardoned for wearing the same coloured Garments with the Judge. Moreover, for the further justification of this Treatise, I have the Holy Scriptures for my President, wherein we may often find recorded the Idolatry of the Ancient Heathens, *viz.* of such as sacrificed to *Baal*, and offer'd up Cakes to the Queen of Heaven : Therefore all further Apologies I shall decline, as unnecessary in so brief a Narrative.

Sect. I.

Before Religion, that is to say, Sacrifices, Rites, Ceremonies, pretended Revelations, and the like, were in-

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vented

vented amongst the Heathens, there was no worship of God but in a rational way, whereof the Philosophers pretending to be Masters, did to this end, not only teach Virtue and Piety, but were also themselves great examples of it in their Lives and Conversations; whom the People chiefly follow'd, till they were seduced by their crafty and covetous Sacerdotal Order; who, instead of the said Virtue and Piety, introduced Fables and Fictions of their own coining; perswading the Vulgar, that as men could not by any natural abilities of their own, know the best manner of serving God, so it was necessary that He should reveal the same to his Priests in some extraordinary manner, for the better instruction of the People. Whereupon pretermittting the Doctrines of Piety and Goodness for the most part, they introduced a Religious worship of their own moulding, which amused and suspended mens minds in great part, and at last made the people relie so much upon them, that

that they neglected their proper duties, confiding chiefly in the Sacrifices, Expiations, and Lustrations of their Priests; who finding they got more by the sins and ignorance of the common people, than by their virtue and knowledge, made divers things sins which otherwise were but indifferent, especially those things which mens natures could with the most difficulty resist: which observation produced this ingenious Copy of Verses from a Modern Author, no less eminent for his Wit, than for his Quality.

Oh wearisom condition of Humanity!

Born under one Law, to another bound:

Vainly begot, and yet forbidden vanity,

Created sick, commanded to be sound.

What meaneth Nature by these divers Laws?

Passion and Reason self-division cause.

*Chorus Sacerdotum,
Ld. Brook's
Mustapha.*

Is it the mark or majesty of Power

To make offences that it may forgive?

Nature her self, doth her own self deflower,

To hate those Errors she her self doth give:

For how should man think that he may not do,

If Nature did not fail and punish too?

Tyrant

The Original of

*Tyrant to others, to her self unjust,
 Only commands things difficult and hard:
 Forbids us all things which it knows is Lust,
 Makes easie pains, impossible reward.
 If Nature did not take delight in blood,
 She would have made more easie way to good.*

*We that are bound by vows and by promotion,
 With pomp of Holy Sacrifice and Rites,
 To teach belief in good and still devotion,
 To preach of Heavens wonders, and delights;
 Yet when each of us in his own Heart looks,
 He finds the God there far unlike his Books.*

They forbad some meats as unclean,
 which yet were wholsome; commanding others to be used, which yet must be offer'd or sacrificed, that so they might have their parts; allotting some days to labour, and others to idleness: of all which, and many more conspicuous in pomp and ceremony, they constituted themselves the Patrons and Procurers. To whom no men were so odious as your incredulous honest men; for if a man were incredulous and vicious, that was the greater honour to the credulous party; or if a man were credulous and vicious,

vicious, that did not any more reflect upon their Religion, than one man's being hang'd for dishonesty scandalizes a Government; besides they might pretend his Faith was never sincere. But he that led an honest virtuous life, without any Faith for their Superstitions, he was the only person odious unto them, as a person that demonstrated unto the World how unnecessary the Priests and their Doctrines were to the propagation of Virtue. The Philosophers had their extravagancies in Natural, but they all agreed in Moral Philosophy; nor was Virtue any where better delineated, than by those ancient Philosophers *Plato, Aristotle, Seneca, Plutarch, Epictetus, &c.* in so much that *Hierophantæ*, or Teachers of Holy Doctrine, was a name anciently and primitively given to Philosophers. *Sit pura mente colendus*: A pure undefiled Spirit is the only Sacrifice which Philosophy commands them to offer unto God. But as that taught the knowledge of God in his works,
and

and a rational way to serve him, so the Doctrines of their Priests introduced not only impertinent, but also absurd and impious Tenents concerning God and Religion, withdrawing them as well from the use of their Reason, as from the study of Truth: not allowing them any knowledge of God, or Religious worship, but what themselves taught. Nay they betray'd the
 „ people into the Adoration of many
 „ Gods, because thereby they acquired
 „ to themselves much greater advantages by adoring many Deities, and
 „ introducing several worships of them,
 „ than they could have expected from
 „ the single worship of one supreme
 „ God. All which serves but to confirm the verity of that Epigram, *Ut melius possis fallere, sume togam.* This Sacerdotal villany was well known to *Diogenes*, as we may learn from the Answer he made to the Priest who came to convert him to be of his Order, in hopes of *Elizium*: *Wilt thou (saith Diogenes) have me to believe that these famous men Agesilaus and Epimanondas*

das shall be miserable, and that thou who art but an *Ass*, and doest nothing of any worth, shalt be happy only because thou art a *Priest*? So contemptible was their profession in that wise man's opinion. But of this more hereafter.

II.

The Primitive Institution of Idolatry receiv'd its Birth from Princes, at whose charge it was afterwards Educated by Ecclesiasticks; the one made the Idol, and the other ordain'd the worship of it. And this we may learn from the Book of the *Wisdom of Solomon*, wherein it is said, *That the Father made the Image of the deceased Son, and the Son of the dead Father.* Thus *Ninus* after the death of his Father *Nimrod*, worshipp'd him by the name of *Bel*, or *Belus*, which in the *Punick* Tongue signifies *God*: (From whence I conceive that error of many Historians does proceed, who hearing of a *Nimrod* that after his death was adored by the name of *Belus*, presently misapprehended them to be two sever-

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ral persons, who were really but one under two several names: And therefore we see *Africanus* begins his Chronicle with *Belus*.) Now the use of this Adoration was to breed a veneration in the common people, not only for the Prince deceased, but likewise for all his Posterity, as men of the *Jupitorean* Race. This Idol being therefore at first worshipp'd only in commemoration of some *Hero*, or gallant person, as his Effigies, grew in time to be by Posterity revered as a God; and as his courage or prudence in his life-time, was conducive to the grandeur and glory of his Subjects, so they thought being dead, he was no less able to assist them: with which expectation they paid frequent Vows, Prayers and Sacrifices unto him, such as were ordain'd by their Priests.

III.

Now Idolatry being thus instituted by the Civil power, the Ecclesiastick was left to build upon that foundation, which presented them with a full
 oppor-

Idolatry and Sacrifices.

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opportunity to introduce those Rites^s and Ceremonies, as might render them necessary in the performance of the same. For as men who drink Healths, do it more for love of the Liquor, than for love of the party whose Health they drink; so did the Heathen Clergy, under pretence of wishing well to others, enrich and advantage themselves: They not being like the Pastors of the Christian Church, who (according to Christ's Rule) ought to be like Sheep amongst Wolves; whereas the others were rather like Wolves among Sheep. Therefore we see with how great malice and violence they persecuted all such as opposed their impious Doctrines, when poor *Socrates* could not escape with his life, only because he preach'd up the belief of one supreme God: From whence we may observe, that as pity is less culpable than malice, so in Superstition is incredulity less mischievous than credulity; the incredulous only pitting the credulous, whereas the credulous always envy the incredulous.

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IV.

Now whenever these Priests wanted wit to delude the Vulgar, with ambiguous Answers of their own inventions, they repair'd to the Temples of their Gods, and there lay all that Night; telling the people at their return, how being half asleep and half awake, their God spake and reveal'd such and such things, which they were commanded again to deliver unto the people for their satisfaction, when any business of importance occur'd in the Commonwealth; speaking therein many times not so much their own sense, as the sense of the Magistrate, where there was occasion to abuse the people into any belief, that might relate to some publick good: in all which cases the Magistrate seem'd first to believe them. Also they had certain Books, which with much solemnity were consulted upon emergent occasions; such were the *Apollinis Libri*, as also the *Sybillina Oracula*, which *Tarquinius* bought
at

at so high a rate, and afterwards depositing them in the Temple of *Jupiter Capitolinus*, might perhaps be there burnt together with the said Temple in *Scylla's* time. The *Hetrusci* had likewise their Books of natural predictions call'd *Flaurusspicini*, *Fulgurales*, & *Rituales*; as also the *Romans* had theirs call'd *Angurales Libri*, wherein was contain'd most of their Religious worship.

V.

The first Idolatry is thought to have come from *Ægypt*, and that the *Ægyptians* in all probability began their Religious worship from the Sun, or at least from the whole Machine of Heaven. The next to the *Ægyptians* were the *Hetrusci*, who proved their Doctrine by Antiquity and Universality, as also by Predictions. But the most ancient Religion next to the *Ægyptian* and *Hetruscan*, was that of the *Druids*, who were heretofore the Priests of *France*, *Germany*, and some parts of *England*. The School of these
Druids

Druids flourish'd within less than one hundred years after the *Phenicians*; and were destroyed, together with their Religious worship, by the Emperor *Tiberius*. These *Druids* (besides some Opinions they held in common with the other *Gentiles*, concerning worship due to the Heavens, Planets, and Stars) took certain observations from Oaks, Galls, and Mistletoe, for their prognostication of the ensuing year. The *Bardi* were a distinct College in *England* from the *Druids*; they had little of the Philosopher or Vaticinator in them. The *Brachmans* were ancient Philosophers and Priests in the *Indies*, and continue so to this day; they hold the Transmigration of Souls with *Pythagoras*, which Opinion (as both *Apian* and *Clemens* affirm) he took from the *Jews*, and was therefore (say they) circumcised after their manner. The *Gymnosophists* were an ancient Sect of Philosophy and Divinity amongst the *Æthiopians*. The *Persians* following *Zoroaster*, acknowledged *duplex principium*, as the *Ægypt*.

Egyptians did ; worshipping the Sun above, and the Fire beneath : They had anciently their Wise men, or *Magi*. The *Thracians* communicated many of their Rites and Ceremonies to the *Grecians*. The *Scythians* and *Getes* had certain Priests and Philosophers instituted according to the manner of *Zamolxis*; who travelling into *Egypt*, brought home with him some of their Doctrines and Ceremonies. The ancient *Roman* Priests took many of their Laws and Ceremonies from the *Etrusci*. The *Germans* and *Celtes* had their Priests which were called *Semnothei*. The *Goths* had their Priests call'd *Parabuscei*. And the *Africans* their Philosophers and Priests call'd *Athantrei*, *Lybici*, & *Hispani*. Now in all these several Sects there were not any two that agreed exactly in their Doctrines, although the fundamental design of all was the same, viz. the sharing of the Sheep ; about which they did frequently quarrel with one another, in so much that one of the Ancients said, He would avoid all

all controverted points until the Priests
were agreed amongst themselves.

VI.

There is nothing does more endanger Religion, than Oblivion : therefore so long as *Jupiter* was preach'd up at all, they did not much concern themselves under what several Names, or several kinds of Adoration they worshipp'd him ; such kind of disputes being but like a quarrel between little Children, who having got one Joynted-Baby amongst them, fall together by the ears about the naming and dressing of it. For Heresies in Religion, are but like Ivy-Trees, which though at first they rend and cleave the Walls whereunto they grow, yet afterwards serve to uphold and support the same. Also the Magistrates did frequently connive at such Heresies, because they found the Authority of Religion so prevalent in mens minds, that their Clergy when well united among themselves, did oftentimes contest with the Secular power ;
which

which grew so dangerous, that they „
 were contented to wink at the many „
 divisions and absurdities amongst „
 them: *ne Sacra plus possent, quam „*
Leges. The chief and most eminent
 Office amongst the *Romans*, was that
 of the *Augurs*: the veneration and
 honour given unto them was so great,
 that they were look'd upon not only
 as the Gods Interpreters, but also as
 Messengers and Agents betwixt them
 and mankind. Besides, they were
 ever advanced to the Senate, and the
 rather, as is conceiv'd, because from
 the first foundation of *Rome*, until the
 change of the Government, Kings „
 were *Augurs*, as not thinking it safe „
 to disjoyn from the Regal power a „
 discipline so full of Authority, as was „
 that of an *Augur*: who were so highly „
 esteem'd among the Ancients, that no
 Magistrate was chosen, nor business
 of importance done, till they were
 first consulted:

Those who to Empire by dark paths aspire; Mr. Dryden
Still plead a Call to what they most desire.

D

Thus

Thus *Romulus* and *Numa* could receive their Scepters only from the *Augurs* hands, as *Titus Livy* informs us.

VII.

„ The Heathen Priests thinking it
 „ dangerous to teach any way to God
 „ which men might go by themselves,
 „ without further guiding and directing, (like Musicians who are unwilling to learn their Scholars to play by Notes, lest they might grow able to improve themselves without a Master) did not (as our Christian Pastors do) furnish the people with a record of their Gods commands, whereby they might walk themselves without any other assistance; but on the contrary they instituted Lustrations, Expiations, and the like, which none but themselves could execute, and all was only to render the Clergy absolutely necessary to the people.

„ The Original of Sacrifices seems to
 „ be as ancient as Religion it self: for
 „ no sooner had men found out that
 „ there was a God, but Priests stepped up
 and

and said, that this God had taught
 them in what manner he would be
 worshipp'd. As Religion therefore
 seems to have began most anciently
 in the Eastern parts, or as some will
 have it in *Ægypt*; so did Sacrifices,
 which from thence were propagated
 to *Greece, Italy*, and other remoter
 parts. The number of Sacrifices (says
 a learned Author) were among the
Ægyptians reckon'd to be 666, which
 without all question were multiplied
 by the Priests of several Countries,
 where the said *Ægyptian* Sacrifices
 were receiv'd. But what a madness
 was this, to think to flatter the Divi-
 nity with Inhumanity? to content the
 Divine goodness with the affliction of
 his Creatures, and to satisfy the Ju-
 stice of God with cruelty? A Super-
 stitious man serveth God out of fear,
 whereas the truly Religious serves
 him out of love. Superstition suffer-
 eth neither God nor man to live at
 rest, as evidently appears by these
 Heathen Sacrifices. What could be
 more sottish or irrational, than to

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think

„ think that the slaughter of a poor in-
 „ nocent Creature, (who follow'd the
 „ simplicity of his own Nature, with-
 „ out ever offending God) should be
 „ so grateful to the Deity, as thereby
 „ we might expiate our sins, and render
 „ a sufficient attonement for the most
 „ execrable villanies of mankind? as if
 the Almighty Justice could be no
 otherwise pleas'd for the errors of
 the Wicked, but by the sufferings of
 the Innocent.

Now as Sacrifices were the most
 „ ancient and universal, so the greatest
 „ and most mysterious fourbs that ever
 „ were invented or imposed upon man-
 „ kind. What have Sacrifices to do
 „ with sins? could none but their un-
 enlightned Priests make peace be-
 tween God and man, when sins were
 committed? was there no address to
 be made to the Divine Majesty, but
 by their Intercession? were they the
 Courtiers of Heaven, and must they
 be first bribed before men could re-
 ceive a pardon for their sins? an in-
 ward and hearty Repentance avail'd
 nothing

nothing amongst them. Neither can the Heathens be excused by saying, that at the same time when Sacrifices were offer'd, they might repent; for it doth so little appear that they commanded Repentance, as we can hardly find any mention thereof in their Religious worship, however we may hope that God did work it in some of their hearts: for we find in *Plato* and other Philosophers, sorrow for sin often enjoyn'd; and we may read among the *Septem Sapientes* this Holy precept, *Quod tibi fieri non vis, alteri ne feceris*, which gives a brave entrance into the Christian Philosophy, as it stands recorded in Holy Writ. But this they ow'd to their Philosophy, and not Theology.

VIII.

The stupidity of these Heathen Sacrifices are sufficiently already exploded by *Lucian*, *Arnobius*, and others: The first condemning them as ridiculous, the latter as impious; for God will be serv'd in Spirit, and that which is

„ is outwardly done, is rather to glo-
 „ rise our selves, than God. Yet how-
 ever, as monstrous as their Doctrines
 and Sacrifices appear, they have been
 the chief support of the *Gentiles* De-
 votion for many thousand years, and
 in some Nations continue to this day.
 „ Perhaps melancholly men might at
 „ first light-upon this Frenzy, by ob-
 „ serving how Nature had inevitably
 „ framed all Creatures to live by de-
 „ vouring and destroying one another;
 a man eats not one morsel, but he de-
 stroyes an Animal or Vegetable life,
 or at least prevents them from attain-
 ing that life, which otherwise they
 would have enjoy'd. Nay, we cannot
 walk one step, but probably we crush
 many Insects creeping under our feet;
 and the same happens to other Crea-
 tures: the Life of each being by Na-
 ture made predatory upon others.

*Torva leena Lupum sequitur Lupus ipse ca-
pellam;*

Florentem Cytisum sequitur lasciva capella
Virg. Ecclog.

Upon

Upon this consideration *Æsop's* Woolf
 (being touch'd in conscience for the
 many murders he had committed) *life is*
 vow'd never more to eat Flesh, till
 being almost famish'd, and espying a
 Hog in a puddle, he was forced by an
 interpretation wiser than his vow, to
 suppose the Hog a Fish, and so by de-
 vouring it, to save himself from star-
 ving. It was also found by experi-
 ence, how many millions of violent
 accidents were ever ready at hand
 to destroy all things that had life in
 them, whereas preservatives were
 rarely to be met with: nor could the
 very best nourishment or Physick re-
 prieve life any considerable time, and
 that also ever attended with some mis-
 chievous quality enclining towards
 death; wherefore but like a small Pa-
 renthesis, intervèning a long dis-
 course: Nor was the longest estate of
 life above a moment, compared with
 that of death, which is for ever irre-
 coverable. Also the sickness of one
 man does often infect others, and ex-
 tends to the destruction of many thou-
 sands:

, / sands : whereas the health of the
 , / soundest Body upon Earth, does not
 , / diffuse it self to the good of any
 , but it self.

IX.

So that by these and such like sinister observations, the destruction of things in being appear'd to them to be more grateful to Heaven, than their preservation : whereupon men rais'd unjust out-cries against the miserable condition of Humane life, laying that fault upon the Deity, which did proceed only from themselves ; and by this means fell to an unworthy opinion of Cruelty in God : and therefore we see the Heathens for three or four eminent *Joves*, had many more *Vejoves*, or mischievous supposed Deities. Nay, they erected Altars to most Diseases and Vices, in hopes thereby to divert their infection from the people : as at this day many of the *Indians* do much more worship and consult the Devil, for fear of mischief, than they do the good

good Spirit which governs the World. But if it were possible for wise and virtuous men to believe, that the Divine power delights in the slaughter and destruction of harmless Creatures which it self hath made, they might perhaps suppose it to proceed, not out of cruelty, but rather as pleas'd to have them by a quick passage withdrawn from the sufferings and lingering decays of long life, to be suddenly establish'd in an everlasting undisturb'd peace and indolency ; or rather, if from our state of ignorance it were possible to interpret Heaven, we might imagine, that it has made all Creatures unavoidably to destroy one another, in as much as that power which governs the Universe, does perhaps contrive the preservation and flourishing estate thereof in a proportion as far exceeding its regard of particulars, as the whole Globe of the Earth exceeds the smallest Sand upon the Sea-shore. And as for particular individuals, *Corruptio unius est Generatio alterius* ; whereby

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it

„ it comes to pass, that not only their
 „ Life, but even their Death, helps to
 „ renew the World, and so tends to its
 „ continuation and prosperity. From
 „ hence now peradventure men of Airie
 „ fancies might conceit, some reason
 „ why in mankind and all other Sub-
 „ lunary things, when any one lasts
 „ longer than is ordinary for others of
 „ its kind to do, it is usually punish'd
 „ with deformity and other decays, for
 „ retarding (as much as in it lies) that
 „ measure of the Worlds Renovation,
 „ which would by its more early change
 „ have accru'd thereunto.

These thoughts unrectify'd have
 even among Christians caus'd some
 Hereticks to think, that God has from
 the first Creation, infused into all pe-
 rishable things two intenal princi-
 ples, the one of Life and preservation,
 the other of Death and destruction;
 also that according as either of these
 are more or less agreeably entertain'd,
 so is the Creature more or less vigo-
 rous and durable. Or peradventure
 they might more appositely have ob-
 served

served the rise and fall of things represented in the rotation of Wheels in a Chariot, whose several Spokes are rais'd up, and cast down by one and the same mover, at one and the same time, without any separate assistant: for so they thought that Infinite power, wisdom, and goodness which is all in all, moves things by his immediate presence and inoperation, without any need of *Aristotle's* Intelligences, *Plato's* Dæmons, or other imaginary powers subservient: Nor that it merits a bad censure for destroying particulars, it being for an universal good.

X.

Now because the generality of men are not thus speculative or Philosophical in their actions, but rather crafty and politick, as designing to themselves power amongst men, and by consequence Riches and Honour, the most nervous and effectual consideration of the Gentiles Sacrifices must be taken that way. Thus when

Princes who in the governing of mankind, found it to be an unruly Creature, mischievous, and not capable to be guided by solid reason or truth, but totally subjected to the Passions of hope and fear ; how false and vain soever it matter'd not, provided that things were well fitted and suitable to their capacities : wherefore they to encourage obedience and good works, held forth gain and preferment ; as on the other side, to deter from disobedience and mischief, they ordain'd forfeitures and disgrace :

Et ponere Leges,
Ne quis fur esset, neu latro, neu quis Adulter.
 Horat. Serm.

Yet in as much as *abundans cautela non nocet*, and seeing there were many clandestine Villanies so secret and undiscoverable, as could hardly be brought to an open conviction, for such the Magistrate rais'd within them *Animo tortore flagellum, viz.* in their Consciences the fear of some future punishment ; whereof for want of that

that true knowledge which we enjoy, they feign'd some of their own inventions, such as the *Stygian* Lake, and the like ; which in as much as the goodness of God , and their present invisibility rendred the less credible, therefore the declaring them to be with material Fire, as also Eternal, did in good measure over-awe that incredulity. From whence we may observe, how necessary and how natural is the belief of a Reward and Punishment hereafter : that even the unenlightned Heathens, as well for conveniency, as from the impulses of their own Natures, were forced to acknowledge it. So rational and so natural is that Article of our Christian Faith.

XI.

Now for the erecting of this Tribunal in the minds of men, they (not being enlightned from above) made use of Superstition, (the off-spring of too much Honour, and too much Fear) which being to be managed
cun-

cunningly, and well fitting to vulgar capacities, they did little or not at all regard the satisfaction of clear rational men. For first, the number of them is so small, as they are of no power; and then they are too wise to hazard their own Ruine for the instruction of foolish men, casting Pearl before Swine; knowing withall, that if any man should be so vain as to oppose the common belief, the *mobile* would (as they did by *Socrates*) oppress and decry him for an Atheist. Therefore the wisest among the Heathens follow'd this Rule in their converse, *Loquendum cum vulgo, sentiendum cum sapientibus; & si mundus vult decipi, decipiatur*. Our Saviour himself found how improper it was to unfold his Sacred mysteries to the ignorant multitude, and therefore explain'd not his Parable of the Sower, till he was alone amongst the Twelve, saying, *Unto you it is given to know the mystery of God: but unto them that are without, all these things are done in parables; that seeing they may see, and not per-*

Mark 4.
11, 12.

perceive, and hearing they may hear, and not understand : lest at any time they may be converted, and their sins should be forgiven them. He that hath ears to hear, let him hear, saith Christ ; that is, not every one that can hear, but only such as are well able to digest and understand what they do hear. Now this kind of reservedness and secreste being likewise observ'd by the most prudent of the Heathens, it made their Priests altogether neglect such thoughts, though never so wise, as being well assured that their Prudence would hinder them from discovering or interesting themselves in the vulgar Superstitions, how sor-rish soever. But nevertheless, to fortifie themselves the better against any such discovery, they ever decry'd Humane wisdom, and magnify'd Ignorance, well knowing that the Seeds of their foolish Doctrine, would prosper no where but in barren ground. Reason teaches that there is but one only supreme God ; but they taught the belief of many Gods. Reason teaches

teaches that the Law of God, viz. that Law which is absolutely necessary to our future happiness, ought to be generally made known to all men; which theirs was not. Reason makes no difference betwixt their *Enthusiasticks*, and our Mad-men. Reason expects some more convincing argument to prove the infallible Divinity of their Laws, Inspirations, and Miracles, than an *ipse dixit*: and upon that Maxim of *Contra Principia non est disputandum*, Reason would reply, *Uno dato absurdo mille sequuntur*. Reason would suspect the power of their *Jupiter*, who had no way to reduce the *Trojans* to himself, but was forced to suffer his own Son *Sarpedon* to be knock'd on the head by them. Reason would tell us that *Romulus* and *Rhemus* were Bastards, and that their Mother *Rhea*'s pretence of being layn with by God *Mars*, was only a sham upon the credulous multitude, hoping thereby to save both her credit and her life. Again, when they desire me to give but the same credit to the
History

History of their Gods, as I do to other History, I will : but as well in their Religious, as in *Livy* or other prophane History, when I hear of an Ox's speaking, or a God's descending in a Cloud and shower of Gold to lye with a woman, in all such miraculous Narrations, my Reason desires to be further satisfy'd in the truth of them, than only by the report of the Author. *Proculus* tells us of *Romulus*'s appearing after his death, and that he saw him all array'd in white, &c. but my Reason bids me *quære*, whether he had not some hand in his murther, and thought by pretending *Romulus* to be taken up to Heaven, to clear himself to the people of that suspicion. *Appollonius Tyaneus* is reported by *Philostratus* to have rais'd a Maid from the dead, but Reason questions whether the Maid was not only asleep ; for sleep is the Image of death. *Philostratus* also further telleth, that *Appollonius* vanish'd away out of the Emperor's presence, before a great number of people : but here Reason

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bids

bids me observe, that although it is reported to have been done in the presence of a great number of people, yet I have but the Testimony of one man for the truth of it, *viz. Philostratus*, and not the Testimony of all those people. The darkness of the Sun at *Julius Caesar's* death, appears to Reason to be but an Accident, proceeding from some Natural cause, and that it was no greater Complement to *Caesar*, than to any other person in the World that dyed at the same moment. There is nothing how impossible soever to be done, that is impossible to be believ'd; for two men conspiring, one to seem *Lame*, and the other to cure him with a Charm, will deceive many; but many conspiring, one to seem *Lame*, the other to cure him, and all the rest to bear witness, will deceive more. Thus when *Vespasian* is said to cure the *Lame* and the *Blind*, Reason reports the story of it thus: That *Vespasian* observing how Kingdoms are preserv'd and augmented by Religion, pretended himself
to

to have an immediate power from Heaven, and for that end corrupted two of his Subjects with money, to feign themselves the one Blind, and the other Lame; whom he afterwards cured with much solemnity before the people. In the same manner the *French Kings* cure men of the Evil; for the Physician first examines the Patient's wound, and if he finds it incurable, then declares it is not the Evil; but if he finds it a Sore that is easie and likely to cure, then the Physician calls it the Evil, that so the King may have the credit of curing that, which would have done well of it self. These and many more such Impostures were put in practice by the Heathens, which for as much as Humane Reason detects, their Priests had great occasion to exclaim against it, as they did. Let us Christians from hence learn to esteem our Religion the more, which stands the Test of Reason, bidding us give a Reason for our Hope.

Furthermore, these grand Hea-
F 2 thenish

thenish Impostures (the *Sacris initiati*, as they call'd themselves) the better to prepare for the planting of their Idolatry in the minds of men, did (under the pretence of speaking after the manner of men) pre-suppose their Gods to be originally of Flesh and Bloud, attributing to them such passions and designs as are only incident to mortals: They made them of both Sexes, Gods and Goddeses; *Jupiter* had his Wife *Juno*, and either for variety, or when weary of her Curtain-Lecture, he went to his Mistresses; but for a fuller entertainment in his Cups, they procured him a *Ganymede*: His Grave was also to be seen in *Crete*, as well as the Grave of any other person; and yet so sottishly impious were they, as to believe this dead man to be the ever-living God. Nay they made their Deities subject to those Vices which were acted but by the worst of men: in so much that nothing is more celebrated in *Jupiter*, than his Adultery; nor in *Mercury*, than his Fraud and Thefts; of whose praises

praises in a Hymn of *Homer's*, the greatest is this : That being born in the morning, he had invented Musick by noon, and before night stoln away the Cattel of *Apollo* from his Herdsmen. Therefore in *Minucius* you may hear *Cælius* telling *Calpurnius*, that the Heathens entertain'd such fabulous Notions of their Gods, as they usually ascribed such horrid things to them, as would be accounted scandalous and dishonourable to any good man :

Immortalia mortali sermone notantes. Lucr.

The Heathens (says *Arnobius*) did by their Gods, as an Ass would do by *Cato*, whom if he were to commend to his fellow Asses, he would say he had delicate long Ears, could Bray very loud, and carry great Burthens; which being the most eminent qualities in Asses, they would attribute them to *Cato* when they meant to praise him : and just so did they impiously judge of their Gods; which an ingenious Physician observing, he would

would never give one of their Priests Physick, till he was inform'd what opinion his Patient had of Divine Vengeance; because if he magnify'd Gods mercy, then he gave him something to purge Flegm; whereas if he extoll'd Gods Judgments, then he gave him something to purge Choller. *Cardan* was so uncharitable as to think this Superstition (which did really sink under the ruines of Paganism) was like the River *Arethusa*, risen up again even among the Christians, saying, *Nos nebulones loquimur de Deo, tanquam de uno è nobis*. But this impiety is so far from being practised amongst us Christians of the Reformed Church, that Atheism it self would be as soon tolerated. *Plintarch* desired rather to be forgotten in the World, than remembred by the Name of the man that used to devour his own Children, as *Saturn* is reported to have done: and it is better to have no opinion of God at all, than such an one as is dishonourable of him, as the Lord *Bacon* well observes.

serves. Yet this was the Heathen Faith; for although they did not own themselves to be made after the Image of God, yet did they in their fond imaginations make their Gods after the Image of men: which must needs occasion the same mutual likeness.

XII.

Having thus therefore manured the Ground of popular understandings, wherein to sow the Seed of vulgar Religions, they sow'd thereupon such kind of Doctrines, as they judged best capable of reception, and most proper to each particular *Genius* of the time and people, according as they found them more or less rude or subtle, debauch'd or austere. Hence grew their Oblations and Altars, whereon they were offer'd: these did always accompany their Prayers; for they supposing their Gods to be like the Eastern Princes, before whom no man might come empty handed, and perhaps because a great part of their Offerings fell to the Priests share; there-

therefore they soon left off *Numa Pompilius's* Institution, who, according to the poverty of those times, ordain'd a little Cake and Salt, with a few Fruits : and so *Pythagoras* appointed Honey, Frankincense, Fruits, Flowers, and other things, but always *incrumenta* ; till in process of time their Gods (or at least their Priests) grew so covetous, that they could not be satiated without the bloud of Beasts ; whereupon men began to offer up Sheep, Oxen, and almost all manner of Beasts, to one God or other ; who at length, like corrupt Judges, were not to be bribed but at high rates, especially where either the Petitioner was a Rich man , or the Boon sued for very considerable, or the God one of the better sort : in such a case Sheep were despised, and nothing less than an Ox would be accepted. Thus by degrees they grew to such excess, that at length in case of a publick Pestilence, or upon some great War-like undertaking, it was not unusual to offer *Hecatombs*, that is, an hundred

dred Oxen, an hundred Sheep, and as many Swine, all at once upon a hundred several Altars. But to exceed all this, some grew to Sacrifice men and women: The ancient *Galli* used to feed a man sumptuously for the space of one year, and then upon a Festival day, they carried him out of the City and stoned him to death, as an Expiation for the sins of the people. Also *Appollonius Tyanæus* thought to stop the Plague at *Ephesus*, by sacrificing a poor old Beggar. Nay some went further than this, and sacrificed their own Children: thus *Agamemnon* upon his undertaking that renowned War of *Troy*, offer'd up his only Daughter *Iphigenia*; and if he could have procured one of the Gods themselves, it is very probable he would have sacrificed him to *Jupiter* or *Mars*, for the better success in his enterprize.

We read in ancient History of many Heathens, who sacrificed their own Lives to propitiate the Gods to their Countries: as *Codrus*, for the

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Athenians; *Menæceus*, for the *Thebans*; *Anchōrus*, for the *Sydonians*; as also *Curtius* and the two *Decii*, for the *Romans*, whereof you may read at large in *Livy's* 8th Book. Thus Humane Sacrifices grew every where so common, that in *Mexico* 20000 men in a year were frequently slain upon their Altars; for the more brutish and unnatural cruelties they used, the more prevalent they thought them with Heaven; and indeed they have usually been crown'd with the most success: perhaps supposing the intentional piety, to prevail above the unnatural act; or rather, that the general confidence of the Gods assistance to be thereby procured, might raise a more then ordinary vigour in the Souldiers minds, which is the chief cause of Victory. Therefore when they were ready to joyn Battel with the Enemy, it was usual to make some Vow to the Gods for their assistance; which when the other party understood, they always out-vow'd the former, in hopes thereby to win the
Gods

Gods from them, or at least to make the Souldiers believe they had : thus the *Crotoniata* in their War against the *Locrenses*, vow'd to *Apollo* the tenth of the Spoyl, if he would give them Victory : whereupon the *Locrenses* to outvie them, vow'd to the same God the ninth part if he would be on their side, and that re-vie carried it. Also the *French* under the conduct of *Aristonicus* against *Flaminius*, vow'd to *Mars* a great Gold Chain ; but *Flaminius* to out-bid them, vow'd to erect a magnificent Trophy, and so prevail'd. Much like the story of a corrupt Judge, who being bribed with a Jar of Oyl, the other party came the next day and presented him with a fat Ox, whereupon he gave sentence for the Ox ; and when the Oyl-man murmur'd, the Judge to excuse the business told him, that in the place, where the Jar of Oyl stood, an unruly Ox brake in and overturn'd it, so as it was quite forgotten. And many times their Prayers were in themselves so wicked

and execrable, as could never hope for a reception; unless usher'd in with a very tempting Oblation:

*Da mihi fallere, da iustum, sanctumq; videri.
Noctem peccatis, & fraudibus, objice nubem.*
Horat.

This Prayer one would think needed a *Heccatomb* at least to render it passable; but their Gods unwilling to let their Altars grow cold, would sometimes, like Country-Attornies, rather take small Fees than none at all, to assist them in their Frauds.

XIII.

Now as there were Sacrifices to obtain things of the Gods, and Peace-offerings to appease their supposed wrath and fury; so also were there others of thanksgiving for Benefits receiv'd: thus the *Thurii* made a solemn Sacrifice to the North-wind, for having dispers'd and sunk the great Fleet which *Dionisius* had sent to invade their Country. But these Kinds of Sacrifices were most practis'd in
private

private Families, and therefore may rather be call'd *Gentilitia*, than *Sacra popularia*: of this sort were the *Sacra Clodiae*, *Emiliae*, *Julianae*, *Corneliae gentis*, &c. mention'd in *Tully* and others; which private *Sacra* were made perpetual by the Laws, and so recommended to Posterity. Now because they were not only chargable, but to be continued from Age to Age as long as the said Family or Inheritance lasted, therefore Purchasers were glad *adire hereditatem*, or to get such a living as was not clogg'd with these entail'd Sacrifices; concerning which, you may find a merry passage in *Plautus*, where a Parasite brags that he had gotten an Inheritance *sine sacris*, *sine sumptu*, &c. but however, there were not so many of these Thanksgiving Sacrifices, as of the other; for as much as all men are naturally inclin'd to covet and wish well to themselves, but few are so generous as when their turns are serv'd, to give thanks, especially if it put them to charge: for thus we see many men
will

will be mighty charitable in giving their blessing, good advice, or ghostly counsel, who nevertheless will not part with a farthing of money. The base ingratitude of mankind, is in a just proportion represented in the ten Lepers; where although the reward expected for their Cure, was only an honest acknowledgement in a few words, yet when they had all they desir'd, and needed no more, there was but one in ten would trouble himself so much as to come and say, Sir, I thank you.

XIV.

Men may wonder why the Heathen Clergy did so highly extoll Sacrifices, to appease Divine wrath against sinners, and so little mention or make use of Repentance? But the Reasons of most obvious conjecture were two: First, they could not but observe how fickle a creature Man is, he seldom holds long in a humour or resolution, especially if it goes against the grain of his natural inclinations; so as in effect,

effect, most men do but like little Children, who having committed a fault, will (to avoid whipping) say they will do so no more, but do it again the next hour : this made Repentance seem to them but formal, if not hypocritical ; and although the intention of amendment of life were for the time in some earnest, for *stultus semper incipit vivere*, and so they may, like dying men in a dangerous fit of sickness, vow to become new men : Yet considering how frequent and certain their Relapses were, it seem'd almost a mockery, or at the best, such carelessness as is hardly to be extenuate by the term of Humane frailty, but rather a downright effect of incredulity : and if so, it were then a very improper Oblation to be recommended from their Clergy, who lived by the credulity of men. For certainly if men did really and seriously believe what they pretend, or what by fits they make themselves think they do believe, they could never live as they do ; so that want of
be-

believing is the only thing which destroys all Religion, both true and false. The other and principal motive which induced the crafty Heathen Priests rather to promote Sacrifices, than Repentance, was for that they were to be managed by none but themselves; and so besides the great Profit they brought them, they also rendered them of absolute and perpetual use to the people; for they could never be laid aside, as being the only men who by their Oblations could mediate with Heaven for them: whereas in Repentance they were altogether unconcern'd, a broken and contrite heart was a Peace-offering which every man could bring for himself, without the Priests assistance, or any gain accruing to them thereby.

XV.

Unless it were in *Japan*, I do not remember to have read of any place where they assumed the Office of Confessors, with power to absolve sinners; which peradventure if they had

had presumed to claim, and could have obtain'd, might have brought them in as great a Reverence as any kind of Oblation whatever; but they either thought not of it, or it may be those great Officers the *Censores Morum* would not admit thereof: for that it was ever found true, *Facile intr ad peccatum ubi venalis est gratia*; especially Rich men would not care how vicious they were, knowing they had wherewithal to procure Absolution when they pleased: so that the Poor seem'd in a manner predestinate to damnation, or Gods Enemies, as the *Turks* call them; who for that reason will very seldom relieve them.

He that would ask, what the ancient Religion of the Heathens was? it may be answered him, that it was their Sacrifices; which varied according to the several manners of each Country. Now however all Sacrifices seem to be the invention of Priests, yet the *Cruenta* especially; many Philosophers condemning them, but

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above all *Pythagoras*, who said, That men ought to permit no Sacrifice made with slaughter; and that innocent Beasts were not to be slain for the Gods, such cruelty being rather likely to aggravate, than extenuate mens other sins; also that Altars were not to be imbrued with Bloud. *Porphyry* likewise saith, That in ancient times it was thought a great crime to kill any harmless innocent Beasts, they being intercommoners with men on Earth: And many besides him were of that opinion; as thinking it enough to take from the Sheep her Fleece, from the Cow her Milk, and from the Ox his Labour, without robbing them of their Lives. The killing of Animals in Sacrifice, was however thought to be very proper for Feasting; they might also not without some good intention be offer'd to their Gods, as to whom they ow'd their Food. The matter of Sacrifices in general, was Flesh, Fish, and Fowl, as also whatsoever did afford savoury and wholesome sustenance,

nance. But amongst all the *Cruenta Sacrificia*, the most ancient seem to be that of Swine, who for the trespass they made upon Agriculture, were offer'd to *Ceres* the Goddess thereof, as we may learn from this line of *Ovid* :

Prima Ceres avida gavisa est sanguine Porca.

Now these *Cruenta Sacrificia* were used not only for Thanksgiving, but also for Expiation of their sins ; as likewise for assembling of the people together to make good Chear, and bring in Roast-meat for the Priests : Nor were Feasts uneffectual for the upholding of the worship of their Gods in the minds of men ; since at all Entertainments, the Company are naturally apt to drink the Founders health. Sacrifices, especially the *Cruenta*, seem to have been first used among the *Ægyptians*, and from them derived to the *Hebrews*, as *Theodoret* confesses ; observing only, that whereas the *Ægyptians* sacrificed either to Dæmons or Idols, the *Israelites*

through the Divine permission were allow'd to offer them to God. St. *Jerome* also upon the words of *Jeremiah*, (chap. 7. ver. 21.) saith, That God at last did allow the use of Sacrifices to himself, lest otherwise they should be made to false Gods: whereupon also he notes, that *Moses* never commanded the use of Sacrifices, but by the way of tollerating them after the *Israelites* were come out of *Ægypt*, where the sweetnes of Sacrifices seems first to have been found out; for not only their Bellies, but also their Backs profited by them; *tunica pelliceæ*, or Coats of Skins being their usual garments: for which reason the *Cruenta Sacrificia* were most esteem'd of all others.

XVI.

There are many general things observable in all or most of their Offerings, and of mystical signification; as this: That although their Gods were notoriously guilty of Fraud, Rapine, and Violence, yet above all other Oblations

lations they delighted most in Creatures meek and harmless, as Doves, Sheep, and Oxen ; which were not only better meat for their Priests than Lyons, Tygers, or the like, but also served for an Emblem, to shew that soft and innocent Natures were ordain'd for a prey to the fraudulent, rapacious and violent : in the observation whereof, the wise Spectators instructed themselves to their own advantage and safety. Much to this purpose was that saying of an ancient Father, *Omnes nos sumus aut Corvi qui lacerant, aut Cadavera quæ lacerantur*; according to our English Proverb, He who makes himself a Sheep, becomes a prey to the Woolf. Therefore *Mahomet* to make his Disciples all Wolves, delivers this impious Doctrine, That he who forgives an injury does well, but he who revenges it does better : supposing that a constant Revenge for injuries, would in time make men more wary of committing them, and by consequence advance Morality. Also *Machiavil's* design

design being to render his Disciples so rapacious, that they might be able to encounter the worst of men, he is by the ingenious *Bocalline* in his *Parnassus*, resembled to a man that driving a Flock of Sheep into a corner, did there take out their own Teeth, and in their stead, gave each of them a set of Wolves Teeth; so that whereas before one Shepherd was able to drive a whole Flock, now each Sheep hath need of a particular Shepherd, and all little enough too. Much to our purpose is it noted by *Plutarch*, that great Princes in their Shields do ever give Creatures of Force and Rapine, as Eagles, Lyons, Dragons, and the like, to teach them how to maintain their Grandeur: in resemblance whereof, *Henry* the 4th of *France* had ever engraven upon his Ordnance this Motto, *Ratio ultima Regum*; but however for petty Princes, a Fox may be the better Emblem.

XVII.

These Sacrifices upon extraordinary occasions, were ever presented with wonderful Solemnity and Magnificence; for according to St. *Paul's* observation, they holding that we were the Off-spring of the Gods, might probably conjecture that our great delight which we take in solemn Shows and Musick, might be originally derived into our Natures, from the like Spirit in the Divine Original Nature, of whom we proceed: and if so, then these kind of Solemnities seem proper Sacrifices to the *Genius* of mankind, and by consequence, would at least take with men, if not with God. However, they were found to work two great effects upon peoples minds: the one, of concern to Religion; the other, to the State. The concern as to Religion was, in raising a kind of Veneration and awful Terroure in the Spectators; which is a frame of Spirit most susceptible of Devotion, excluding

ding all wandering, light and vain thoughts. Therefore in the most ancient times, the chief part of their Divine worship was celebrated in thick Groves; and afterwards when they erected Temples, many of them were of magnificent structure, but ever so gloomy and dark, as they were in the day time fain to make use of Lamps upon their Altars; for such a Light represents any Show much more splendidly than open day-light: As we plainly see in our Theatres, who but for that advantage, would never be at the charge of Lamps and Candles in the Summer time. These stately Representations of their Offerings, with the Priests fantastical Vestments and profound Gravity, was a kind of Acting their Religion as it were upon a Stage; and it fared also with that as with Opera's, which ever take better Acted, than Read: *Segnius irritant animos demissa per aures, quam que sunt oculis subjecta fidelibus.* The whole History of most of their Gods, was at the time of their several Festivals

vals very splendidly Acted after the manner of publick Plays, and generally in dumb-shows, without any words at all ; as supposing every one from his Childhood acquainted with the Story by his Religious education. These Shows upheld their fabulous Divinity many thousand years, perhaps much longer than if they had grounded it upon Argumentative discourses and Syllogisms, which are knacks that either take not the multitude at all, or never hold them long : for either the cares of the World stifle them, or at best after a time they grow as tedious as a Fiddler that can play but one Tune. Besides, these frequent Representations were no less effectual to strengthen the peoples Faith, than if they heard the Articles of their Faith daily rehears'd unto them ; which is the most prevalent way of Naturalizing a Religion to the people, how false soever : since nothing is more frequent, than to have men tell Lyes (though of their own inventions) so often,
I till

till in time they themselves grow to believe them true.

XVIII.

The other concern, *viz.* of the State in those great Sanguinary Sacrifices, was by innuring the People to such horrid and bloody Sights, which though but of Beasts, yet doubtless tended much to the hardning of their hearts against all apprehensions of blood and death, either in themselves or others; rendring them fitter for the Wars, and thereby more capable either of defending or enlarging their Empire. Upon this consideration it is, that our Laws will not admit a Butcher to serve upon the Jury of Life and Death: Also at the Battel of *Edgehill* it was generally observ'd, that one Foot-Regiment of Butchers, behaved themselves more stoutly than any other Regiment of either side; and yet they had never before that time been flesh'd in any blood but that of Beasts. To this purpose therefore the ancient *Romans* did much harden

harden the hearts of their men, by using them to various other inhumane bloody Sights: as Gladiators slaughtering one another in their Amphitheatres; and condemning Malefactors to be there torn in pieces by wilde Beasts, for the diversion of the People: which occasion'd the Primitive Church to prohibit the Christians all such bloody Sights, as not intending or approving of such hardness of heart, but rather choosing to govern in the Spirit of meekness and innocence, hoping thereby to gain a greater submission: whereas the Heathen Princes (especially the *Romans*) when they arrived to that Grandeur as encouraged them into an ambition of conquering the Universe, desired in pursuance of that wicked design, to educate their people in such fierceness and inhumanity as might fit them for that purpose. And the Heathen Priests (who were certainly the wickedest and craftiest of men) knowing how serviceable they might be to the Prince, as well as the Prince to them,

in a despotick Government, soon discover'd their own interest, in being contributors to that design.

XIX.

Now considering these things, and where all regard of God and Nature was laid aside, the use of their Sacrifices could not but be very pertinent; and apprehended that way, were not so absurd as by *Lucian* and other ingenious persons they are represented to have been. The common people were so weak, as to be deluded into the belief of these Trumperies, by that fallacious Argument which all Superstitions have ever made use of, and indeed lyes as well for one as another, (*viz.*) that the vulgar Faith was the safest. But however, the great and prudent men among them were not so sottish and blind, as not to discern the intrinsic worthlessness of their Superstitions, however they upheld them for worldly advantage; and therefore when a *Roman General* deferr'd to give the signal of a Battel, because

because the Soothsayers Chickens forbore to eat ; a young Nobleman standing by, told him, He wondred he would omit so great an opportunity for so small a thing : to whom the General reply'd, These things seem small, but our Forefathers by regarding these little things, have made this Commonwealth great. And to shew that when they were not under these politick corruptions, but free to declare their own Judgments, their inward Devotion was more excellent than their outward Profession, observe what one of their own Poets delivers concerning Sacrifices :

*Non Bove mactato cœlestia numina gaudent,
Sed quæ præstanda est vel sine teste Fides. Ov.*

FINIS.